

# FIELD ★ NOTES

South Central District

Winter 2004/2005

## FROM THE DISTRICT MANAGER

South Central District stakeholders:

The campaign for 'Zero' – zero accidents and zero injuries – continues throughout the district. I see evidence of your efforts everywhere I visit and with many of you I talk to each week. Recently, I traveled to Morton Salt's Weeks Island mine where I had the pleasure of meeting a few employees who have worked for over 40 years injury free. I also traveled



Edward E.  
Lopez

to Phelps Dodge's Tyrone and Chino Mines, where again I had the pleasure of meeting employees who have worked 40 plus years injury free. TXI's Hunter plant has worked 484 safe

days and two Lafarge Group mines were recently recognized as the safest in their international group.

In order to help us in our endeavor to reach 'Zero', MSHA has introduced the SLAM Risks initiative. This initiative merely asks each miner to Stop, Look, Analyze, and Manage risk. SLAM is not intended to circumvent any ongoing programs that your company has introduced. It was designed only to complement programs already in place or to offer ideas to those of you who may not have a program currently in place. You can go to [www.MSHA.gov](http://www.MSHA.gov) to read more about this initiative. MSHA employees will be handing out SLAM materials as they visit your operations during the coming weeks.

The road to 'Zero' must be paved with *Optimism!*

E/.

## CELEBRATING 'ZERO'



The Valley #1 Tolar Pit, owned by Valley Inc., recently completed 10 years without a reportable injury. The mine is a surface sand and gravel operation that has been in business for 41 years. The pit is located near the town of Tolar, in eastern New Mexico. Mine employees shown above are from the left: Terry Truelock, president; David Steinebach, driver; Tim Trotter, driver; Jennifer Lane, safety coordinator; Matt Stewart, plant operator; and Steven Schmidt, plant operator. Congratulations to them all!

The New Mexico Bureau of Mine Inspection has set up an Accident Free Safety Awards Program to honor companies in New Mexico that have worked increments of 5 years without a reportable injury. Some of the mines honored in the past 3 months are:

Bruhn Enterprises	10 year award
Valley Incorporated	10 year award
Bartoo Sand & Gravel	10 year award
Copar Pumice	10 year award
Mesa Verde Enterprises	5 year award
Eker Brothers	5 year award

## MORE 'ZERO' ACCOUNTS

### NO LOST TIME IN 39 YEARS



Robert Blakeney, instrument & electrical technician, has worked for Alcoa World Alumina Atlantic at the Bayer Alumina Plant in Point Comfort, Texas since August 16, 1965 without a lost time injury.

### PROFESSIONAL MINER RECOGNITION



Every employee in the MSHA Little Rock office received Professional Miner status with the Joseph A. Holmes Safety Association on October 31, 2004. Shown above in the front row are James Shaffer, Mark Albrecht, Charles Morrison, Chester Brown, and Joe Norwood. Shown in the second row are Carl Jones, Mark Shearer, Robert Capps, and Jeff Phillips.

For information on the Professional Miner program, please visit the Joseph A. Holmes web site at <http://www.holmessafety.org/prominer/index.htm>.

### NO LOST TIME IN 45 YEARS



Roy G. Esquivel, Sr. (above), a Martin Marietta supervisor at their Poteet Sand Plant, has worked 45 years without a lost time accident. Roy started at the Westside Plant in 1959 as a haul unit operator. Since then, he has operated a loader and a wash plant and supervised at several locations. Roy says that he has seen a dramatic culture change in the industry and now sees safety as a lifestyle that is practiced daily.

### TXI SAFETY NOTES

TXI Hunter Cement recently recognized 8 employees for 25 years of working safely. They were Larry Ratliff, Martin Cortez, Henry Hendricks, John Holtman, Mario Juarez, Anne Pardo, Jimmy Sisak, and Paul Torres.

On November 9, 2004; TXI Midlothian Cement honored several employees for exemplary safety records. Darrell Crecelius, Jim Frederick, Danny Miller, and Don Stanfield with 35 years; Wayne Switzer and Danny Wilkerson with 30 years; Brian Durrett, Jilberto Gutierrez, Terry Leonard, Kelly Pitner, and Jose Rangel with 25 years.

The TXI Clodine team has worked safely for 1000 days.

As of October 29, 2004, TXI's Louisiana Baywood Operation group had worked safely for 1000 days.

## NEWS AROUND THE DISTRICT



Mitch Adams, assistant district manager, spoke to the Texas state-wide meeting of the Holmes Safety Association about 'I Believe in Zero' at Waxahachie, Texas on September 16, 2004. The University of Texas at Austin, along with Holmes' state officers, coordinated the event.



Texas Holmes Safety Association officers at the state-wide meeting at Waxahachie included from left: treasurer John Henderson from the University of Texas at Austin, second vice-president Judy Tate from MSHA, president Arturo Munoz from Trinity Materials, and secretary Court Van Sickler from Cemex USA.

### SAFETY IS A VALUE

#### Injury Classifications Most Frequently Reported (12 Mos. FY-04 in SCD)

Handling Material	358 injuries
Slip or Fall of Person	217 injuries
Machinery	131 injuries
<b>All Classifications</b>	<b>1074 injuries</b>

### ARKANSAS CONFERENCE IN FEBRUARY

The 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Arkansas Mine Health and Safety Conference has been set for February 3-4, 2005 at the Clarion Resort On The Lake in Hot Springs, Arkansas. For more information or to request registration forms, call Bonita Stocks at 501-682-4520 or email at [bonita.1.stocks@arkansas.gov](mailto:bonita.1.stocks@arkansas.gov).

### 2003 SENTINELS OF SAFETY AWARDS

The Holmes Safety Association recently announced the recipients of the 2003 Sentinels of Safety awards during the MineExpo in Las Vegas, Nevada. South Central District mines honored included:

Fletcher Mine/The Doe Run Company  
(runner-up, underground metal group)

Casteel Mine/The Doe Run Company  
(runner-up, underground metal group)

Randolph Mine/Hunt Midwest Mining, Inc.  
(runner-up, underground non-metal group)

Southard Mine and Plant/United States Gypsum Co.  
(runner-up, open pit group)

Little River Plant/Hanson Aggregates West, Inc.  
(runner-up, bank or pit group)

MTI Ready Mix/Mullen-Telles, Inc.  
(runner-up, bank or pit group)

M-2/Quality Materials  
(runner-up, dredge group)

Sorters Sand & Gravel/Sorters Sand & Gravel  
(runner-up, dredge group)

Porter Plant/Hallett Materials  
(runner-up, dredge group)

### JOINT CONFERENCE IN MARCH

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual South Central Joint Mine Health & Safety Conference has been scheduled for March 21-24, 2005 at the Marriott River Center in San Antonio, Texas. The conference will offer a variety of speakers, presentations, workshops, and meetings, along with an awards banquet, golf tournament, and vendor hospitality. For reservations, call 800-648-4462 or 210-223-1000.

## NEWS AROUND THE DISTRICT



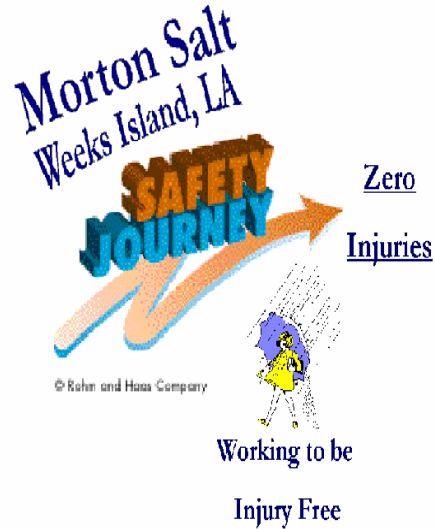
District manager Eddie Lopez delivered opening remarks at the Oklahoma Health and Safety Conference on October 5. The conference was jointly sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Mines, the Oklahoma Miner Training Institute, and MSHA.



Employees of Lafarge Aggregates in New Mexico gathered at the Santa Ana Pit on October 29, 2004 to celebrate working 2,056,125 hours without a lost time accident in the past three years. District manager Eddie Lopez and metal/nonmetal administrator Robert Friend were present to join in the luncheon celebration.

### SLAM RISKS

To help focus the industry's attention on getting fatalities and injuries down to zero, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) announced an End of Summer Safety Stand Down. This Stand Down kicked off a national risk assessment initiative to introduce a simple risk management technique: Stop, Look, Analyze and Manage - SLAM - risk in the workplace. The SLAM initiative is a long-term effort to further reduce mining accidents and send more safe and healthy miners home to their families each day.



### MERGER NEWS

Cargill Crop Nutrition, a business unit of Cargill, Inc., recently merged with IMC Global to form the world's second-largest crop nutrition firm. The new company is called The Mosaic Company and produces and markets concentrated phosphate and potash crop nutrients. Mosaic has major production facilities in four U.S. states, including Louisiana and New Mexico, and the Province of Saskatchewan, Canada.

Mosaic chief executive officer and president, Fredric W. Corrigan, stated that the company will implement best practices from both Cargill and IMC in mining, safety, and other areas.

Mining operations affected by the formation of Mosaic include the IMC Potash mine near Carlsbad, New Mexico. Cargill's Avery Island mine in Louisiana is part of the Cargill Salt business unit and will be unaffected by the merger.

Readers are invited to submit photos and story lines to [gatewood.fred@dol.gov](mailto:gatewood.fred@dol.gov) or [palmer.bruce@dol.gov](mailto:palmer.bruce@dol.gov) for possible inclusion in future 'Field Notes'.

## UMR/MISSOURI REGIONAL MINE RESCUE CONTEST OCTOBER 7-8, 2004



The WIPP Blue Team (shown above) from Carlsbad, New Mexico, led by captain Gary Kessler, finished first in the field competition.

### FIRST PLACE BY CONTEST

Field	WIPP Blue
BG-174a	Mike Smith (Mississippi Lime)
BG-4	Curtis Sanders (WIPP Blue)
Gas instrument	Richard Dickerson (Doe Run)
First Aid	WIPP Blue



Members of the MSHA national mine rescue teams (shown above) traveled to Rolla, Missouri to judge the regional competitions. They also took the opportunity to practice together in the UMR experimental mine the day before the contest.



The University of Missouri at Rolla (UMR) fielded two teams (Black and Gold) this year. The Gold Team (shown above), led by captain John Combs, finished fourth in the field competition.

Gold Team member Catherine Skzyniarz, (far left above) was an MSHA intern in the Dallas district office during the summer of 2004.

Gold Team member, Adam Kresler (far right above) finished second in the BG-174a competition.



The Mina Proano team (shown above), representing Penoles, Mexico, traveled farthest to participate in the mine rescue contest this year. The team was led by captain Cesar Flores and placed fifth in the field competition.

## DISTRICT HEALTH NOTES

### GASSY!

*By Bruce Palmer  
(District Industrial Hygienist)*



“*Gassy*” refers to mines that have levels of gases that must be diluted with pure air to prevent an explosion. **Methane** is normally the culprit. Methane – or “natural gas” – is a valuable resource, and provides energy for industry as well

as for heating and cooking in homes around the world. However, its readiness to ignite when mixed with air also makes it dangerous at certain levels – specifically when air contains above 5.3 percent methane. This number is called the “Lower Explosive Limit” (LEL).

When the amount of methane, pentane, butane, propane, gasoline vapor, or any other explosive gas reaches its LEL, just a spark can cause an explosion.

This is why smoking is prohibited near the pumps at gas stations – and is prohibited by MSHA regulations “within 50 feet of explosive material” (30 CFR 56/57.6904) or in gassy underground mines (57.22101-22105).

Not all underground mines are “gassy.” MSHA assigns categories and sub-categories to all mines, according to their “gassiness” (57.22003). Categories I and III apply to mines that either “liberate methane or have the potential” to do so at explosive levels.

Category II applies to salt dome mines with potential for a sudden, violent release of solids, methane and other gases. There are three such mines in the south central district, all in southern Louisiana.

Category IV mines liberate methane, but not at explosive levels. Category V mines are petroleum mines (yes, “*crude*” can be mined!). Category VI applies to those mines “in which the presence of methane has not been established” (the majority of the mines in this district).

Special requirements for ventilation apply to gassy mines. All mines except category IV and VI require weekly methane tests, and immediate ventilation changes if the methane is found to be at certain levels.

Most of the time when MSHA inspectors go underground, they carry hand-held electronic multi-gas detectors. Their typical instrument can detect methane as well as oxygen, carbon monoxide (CO), and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>).

The latter two gases are not explosive, but they are *toxic*; CO is particularly dangerous because it’s odorless and colorless, while NO<sub>2</sub> is deadly at very low levels. These two gases are associated with blasting as well as the exhaust gases of underground diesel equipment.

There are 37 underground mines in the 6-state area covered by the south central district. That represents about 3000 miners. The safety of these men and women depends on both MSHA inspectors and the miners themselves maintaining instruments in proper calibration, using them regularly -- and responding rapidly to any indications that toxic or explosive gases are approaching dangerous levels.